FEEDS UPON INSECTS

Bobolink a Common Summer Resident in Northern States.

FEEDS MAINLY ON INSECTS

Also Devours Many Weed Seeds—Inaccurate Grading Cause of Much Loss to Western Wool Growers—Remedy Is Suggested.

(Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture.)

The bobolink, rice bird, or reed bird, is a common summer resident of the United States, north of about latitude 40 degrees, and from New England westward to the Great Plains, wintering beyond our southern border. In New England there are few birds about which so much romance clusters as this rollicking songster, naturally associated with sunny June meadows; but in the South there are none on whose head so many maledictions have been heaped on account of its fondness for rice.

During its sojourn in the northern states it feed mainly upon insects and seeds of useless plants; but while rearing its young, insects constitute its chief food, and almost the exclusive diet of its brood. After the young are able to fly, the whole family gathers into a small flock and begins to live

Bobolink, Rice Bird or Reed Bird—Length About Seven Inches.

almost entirely upon vegetable food. This consists for the most part of weed seeds, since in the North these birds do not appear to attack grain to any great extent. They eat a few oats, but their stomachs do not reveal a great quantity of this or any other grain.

As the season advances they gather into large flocks and move southward, until by the end of August nearly all have left their breeding grounds. On their way they frequent the reedy marshes about the mouths of rivers and on the inland waters of the coast region and subsist largely upon wild rice.

Formerly, when the low marshy shores of the Carolinas and some of the more southern states were devoted to rice culture the bobolinks made great havoc both upon the sprouting rice in spring and upon the ripening grain on their return migration in the fall. With a change in the rice-raising districts, however, this damage is no longer done.

Co-operative Marketing of Wool.

Serious losses are often suffered by the flock master because of improper methods of handling the clip. Western wool growers are paid lower prices than foreign producers because of inaccurate grading. In recent years they have made some advancement in clipping and assorting fleeces as shown by cleaner clips being offered for sale in some localities. In the West some of the large sheep breeders' associations have officially recommended certain changes in the handling of wool by the growers. It is estimated that improper methods of preparing the wool for shipment cost the flock master from one to three cents a pound, for the manufacturer is frequently put to an extra expense, against which, of course, he protects himself by lowering the price to the grower.

To remedy this condition, some form of co-operation among wool growers in any given region is urged in a new publication of the department of agriculture, bulletin 206, "The Wool Grower and the Wool Trade." The individual alone can do little to improve matters, for his clip is likely to be too small to induce the buyers to make any alteration in their accustomed methods of estimating wool values. With co-operation, however, it should be possible to prepare the entire clip of any section so that the reputation of its wool would be enhanced and the growers obtain the full market value of their product. A sufficient number of wool growers should be included in each co-operative association to enable at least 4,000 or 5,000 pounds of each of the various grades to be marketed at one time.

Co-operation will, of course, do little good, however, unless the individual growers follow improved methods of handling the clip. An instance of the present low price of American wool as compared with foreign is given in the bulletin already mentioned. Two lots of wool of the same grade, one of them from Idaho and the other from Australia, were purchased by a Philadelphia manufacturer—the American at 18½ cents a pound and the foreign one at 28 cents a pound, before scouring. In the American fleece the kind of wool that this manufacturer really wanted amounted to 86.79 per cent of the total; in the foreign fleece to 98.96 per cent. A more accurate system of grading had given this manufacturer 12 per cent more of what he wanted than the American methods. In consequence the foreign sheep grower got the larger price for his fleece. The manufacturer paid for the imported wool 28 cents a pound and for the domestic wool 18½ cents a pound—a difference of 9½ cents. By the time shrinkage, "off sorts," etc., had been deducted, however, the cost per clean pound to the manufacturer of the wool he wanted was 41.32 cents for the American fleece and 44.69 cents for the imported—a difference of only 3.37 cents.

The bulletin suggests 15 rules for the wool grower which, it is said, no one can afford to neglect if he is at all solicitous of the reputation of his clip. These rules are:

1. Adhere to a settled policy of breeding the type of sheep suitable to the locality.
2. Sack lambs', ewes', wethers' and all buck, or very oily fleeces separately. If the bucks or part of the ewes or wethers have wool of widely different kind from the remainder of the flock, shear such separately and put the wool in separate sacks so marked.
3. Shear all black sheep at one time, preferably last, and put the wool in separate sacks.
4. Remove and sack separately all tags, and then allow no tag discount upon the clip as a whole.
5. Have slatted floors in the holding pens.
6. Use a smooth, light and hard glazed (preferably paper) twine.
7. Securely knot the string on each fleece.
8. Turn sacks wrong side out and shake well before filling.
9. Keep wood dry at all times.
10. Make the brands on the sheep as small as possible and use a branding material that will scour out.
11. Know the grade and value of your wool and price it accordingly.
12. Do not sweat sheep excessively before shearing.
13. Keep the corral sweepings out of the wool.
14. Do not sell the wool before it is grown.
15. When all these rules are followed place your personal brand or your name upon the bags or bales.

CABBAGE STORING IS SIMPLE

Cheaply Constructed Bank or Hillside Root Cellar Is Only Shelter Needed—Keep Place Cool.

(By K. A. KIRKPATRICK, Minnesota Experiment Station.)

Cabbage storing is rather simple and easy. The shrinkage is small. A cheaply constructed bank or hillside root cellar, or a basement under almost any farm building, is the only storehouse necessary. This should not be too dry and should be a place which could be kept at a temperature of about 40 or 50 degrees in the early part of the season. This is often accomplished by opening the doors to let in the cool night air and closing them to keep out the warmer air during the remainder of the day. Later, of course, the doors must be kept closed continuously.

In storing, most growers place the heads in a cellar with all leaves and roots attached. Many market gardeners have a better plan. They cut off the stalk as though preparing the heads for market, but leave two or three rough leaves to protect the more tender parts. They then pack in ordinary cabbage crates and rack these crates up, leaving a gangway every third or fourth tier for air circulation.

This work is not particularly difficult, and will certainly pay the grower well if it increases the selling price of his production eight or tenfold. For the last few years, it has been marketed and harvested at from $5 to $7 50 a ton. The purchaser has stored it and sold it during the late winter for $50 or $60 a ton.

Fattening Wethers for Market.

The wethers intended for the fall market should be taken from the flock, put by themselves, and fed liberally until they are so fat that another week's feeding will not add a pound.

Use Axle Grease Liberally.

Axle grease is cheap, so do not wait until your axle gets dry before giving it grease. Besides, it injures the axle to let it get dry, and makes double and treble work for your horse.

The Patriot.

Sir Thomas Lipton said at a provisioners' banquet in London:

"All the blame for high prices is put on us dealers. You'd think, the way some people talk, that we dealers were as false in our patriotism as the chap who was sanding his sugar the other day with his errand boy's help.

"The errand boy, lifting a scoopful of sand, asked:

"'The usual proportion, sir?'

"'No, Joseph, of course not,' the boss replied sternly. "The usual proportion in days like these? Joseph, where's your patriotism?'

"Then he sighed and added:

"'Only half the usual proportion of sand, Joseph—only half the usual proportion as long as our gallant troops at the front have such need of sandbags.'"

The Reason.

"They have to have civil weddings in France."

"I suppose that is because they have the reputation of being such a polite people."

Putting It Accurately.

"Have you got any mosquitoes around here?"

"No," replied Farmer Corntossel. "We haven't got them. They've got us."

Robert Edeson, the actor, recently inherited $100,000. The property is chiefly a rice plantation in Louisiana.

Russia has forbidden the export of poultry, dead or alive.

MAN'S SHORT TERM OF LIFE

In Comparison With Other Animals He Does Not Nearly Live Out His Allotted Time.

A rule which holds fairly true among the higher animals is that an animal lives five times as long as it requires for his muscular system to reach its full strength. The dog is fully developed at between two and three years of age, and lives fifteen years; the horse reaches his prime not later than five, and if he escapes overwork and ill usage, lives to be twenty-five and even thirty. In fact, the rule seems to be an understatement of animal expectation of life, rather than an overstatement.

The one conspicuous exception is man, who seldom reaches his full muscular strength before he is twenty-five and counts himself living on borrowed time if he passes the age of seventy. If man were as well circumstanced in this matter as the horse, dog or cat, his average term of life would vary from one hundred and ten to one hundred and twenty-five years.

No Mistake.

"That chap gets a thousand dollars a week," said the movie fan, indicating the funny man on the screen.

"How do you know he does?"

"I guess I ought to know. Don't I pay ten cents a week toward it?"

Enforced Penance.

Suitor—You marry couples, squire? Squire (a woman hater)—Yes, I suppose so; if you insist.

The Last Straw.

Mary Jane's master is a slightly eccentric bachelor. He has one most irritating habit. Instead of telling her what he wants done by word of mouth he leaves on his desk, or on the kitchen table, or anywhere else where she is likely to see it, a note curtly directing her to "Dust the dining room" or "Turn out my cupboard," and so on.

The other day he bought some notepaper, with the usual die-sunk address imprinted upon it, from the stationer, and ordered it to be sent home.

Mary Jane took it in, and the first thing that caught her eye was a note attached to the package. She read it open-eyed.

"Well," she said, "he's asked me to do a few things in his blessed notes, but this is the limit. I wont' stand it no longer!"

For the note read:

"Die Inside This Package."—London Mail.

Here's a Fine Idea.

"Please, ma'am," said the little girl from the next door, "mother wants to know if you will lend her your new mechanical tune player this afternoon."

"What an extraordinary idea! Is she going to give a dance?"

"No, ma'am. We're tired dancing to it. She wants to keep it quiet for a couple of hours so that the baby can sleep."

Poetic.

He—Dearest, don't you think we would make a good couplet?

She—Ah, I am not averse.